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Tropical Storm Isaac bears down in the Caribbean



PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Tropical Storm Isaac strengthened as it passed over the Dominican Republic and vulnerable Haiti yesterday, threatening to bring punishing rains but unlikely to gain enough steam to strike as a hurricane.

Forecasters now expect the storm to stay below hurricane force until it reaches the Gulf of Mexico, staying to the west of Tampa, Florida, where the Republican National Convention starts on Monday, though there is still an outside chance it could hit there.

Forecaster Eric Blake of the U.S. National Hurricane Center said it is "too early to know" the storm's exact

course, though projections indicated the storm could make U.S. landfall near the Alabama-Mississippi border.

In Haiti, the government and international aid groups evacuated several thousand people from one of the settlement camps that sprang up in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake.

In flood-prone Haiti, Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe urged people to avoid crossing rivers, to tape their windows, and to stay calm, saying "panic creates more problems."

About 400,000 people remain in settlement camps comprised of shacks and tarps in the wake of Haiti's devastating 2010 earthquake.

Pullmantur Cruises commits to Aruba with a larger ship and more frequent service



ATA CEO Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes, Jose Manuel Martin, Prime Minister Eman, Jaime Florez, and Minister Oduber



PM Eman presents a gift to Jaime Florez

Aruba's Prime Minister Mike Eman and Minister of Tourism, Transport & Labor, Otmar Oduber, were very pleased to receive Pullmantur International Director José Manuel Martin and Commercial Director for Central America, Jaime Florez for finalization and confirmation of more frequent service to Aruba.

The Spanish cruise company began operations in the late 1990s as an offshoot of the Madrid-based travel agency Pullmantur. Through its parent company, it was purchased by Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.

in 2006.

Previously, they only stopped in Aruba four months out of the year, but have now committed to a new cruise season beginning in April of 2013, which will run through January of 2012, non-stop. The ship deployed will be The Monarch, with a capacity of 2850 passengers. Formally, their ship deployed only carried 1500. They are scheduled to stop Aruba 48 times over their extended season, bringing several thousand more visitors to the island than in before.

Continued on page 4



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New Director of Santa Rosa is Nathalie Maduro



On Thursday the Minister in charge of Santa Rosa, Otmar Oduber, met with the staff and personnel of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock, known to us as Santa Rosa.

The Minister used the opportunity to congratulate the Department for the good work they have been doing and for the way that the community has responded to their new and innovative services to the community. He reported that, as a result of their good work and focus on all three areas, fisheries, agriculture and livestock, many requests are being registered for persons wanting land to

begin exploring agricultural ventures.

Oduber expressed that, very few departments have achieved what Santa Rosa has in such a relatively short period of time – one and a half year. They now have two new trucks, a dump truck and soon they will receive a Bobcat. He said that... "after three years we can all be proud of Santa Rosa."

Oduber then took the opportunity to present the employees and staff with their new director in the person of Nathalie Maduro.

Continued on page 5

Sunday KOFFIE MORGEN Slot Tournament \$1000,- Cash Prizes
Monday Cool Raffle Awg 1000,- Earn DOUBLE POINTS all day
Tuesday Cool Raffle Awg 1000,- Earn DOUBLE POINTS all day
Wednesday Raffle AWG 500,- Cool Casino - LADIES NIGHT
Thursday Cool Raffle Awg 1000,- Earn DOUBLE POINTS all day
Friday BlackJack Tournament \$500,-
Saturday KOFFIE MORGEN Cool Raffle Awg 1500,- Triple Points all day



Where Every One is Welcome

Management reserves the right to discontinue this promotion at any time

Hello Yellow! Aruba phone book launches search app for Android and Apple devices

Global Directories, publisher of the official telephone directory Aruba Yellow Pages for SETAR, the island's national telecommunications company, announced the launch of their official Aruba mobile application on Thursday, August 23. Acting Sales Manager Marjolein Rodriguez and consultant Natessa Mansur demonstrated the free download for media at the offices in Oranjestad. The new app will provide consumers with a user-friendly



The yellow pages always at your fingertips



Voice activated searches on the iPad

tool to easily search and discover local businesses when using an iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch or Android device.

"Consumers are increasingly looking for useful and relevant local business information or phone numbers from their mobile devices when they are on-the-go," explained Marjolein. "Our new Aruba Yellow Pages mobile app puts the power of our network in the hands of every Android and Apple iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch user and gives our advertisers access to a significant number of potential customers."

Jeannemarie Croes, representing SETAR NV, expressed the delight of the company to be able to provide this timely service to its subscribers.

Natessa demonstrated the application, which enables users to search the Aruba Yellow Pages with a touch, or in the case of certain devices, such as the iPad, with voice recognition software. Features include:

- Business phone number look-up,
- Search by Text Entry or Voice Recognition,

- Conveniently sort results by Relevance, Distance, or Alphabetically,
- Easy click-to-call dialling,
- Map & Directions,
- Easily access business addresses, websites, face book site, email, ads videos and much more.

Still in development, but soon to be available, is a mobile app for the Blackberry. The Aruba Yellow Pages application can be downloaded directly to an Android device by visiting Google Play Store at

<https://play.google.com/store>, or via the Playstore icon on the Android device. Apple users can download the Aruba Yellow Pages application by visiting the App Store.

Marjolein also reminds all companies that the Aruba Yellow Pages is reaching their deadline to make changes for the new edition of the 2013 Setar NV telephone directory. They ask those interested in being accessible on the mobile app and needing to update their information, to please contact one of their advertising con-



Natessa demonstrates the android download

sultants at 582-0485 or via their website: www.arubayp.com.

by Rosalie Klein



Saturday

Where Every One is Welcome

3x Triple Points (10am-6pm)





Koffie Morgen

Cool Raffle Awg 1500

9:30 PM 500 AWG
10:30 PM 500 AWG
11:30 PM 500 AWG

Live Band 9pm - 1am
Robert Thiel




Sunday

Where Every One is Welcome

3x Triple Points (10am-6pm)



Koffie Morgen

SLOT TOURNAMENT

\$1000 Cash Prizes

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Robert Thiel 09pm-12am

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Pullmantur Cruises commits to Aruba

Continued from page 1

The Pullmantur cruise offers a great number of amenities and conveniences, with a complete price included premium liquors and wine, aside from food service and accommodations. Children ages two to 16 travel for free during the months of August and September, exclusive of port fees and taxes. During cruise season, children ages two to 12 travel gratis, and ages 13 to 16 travel half-price.

Another unusual amenity to

the Monarch route is passengers can choose to embark on Aruba. Cartagena - Colombia, La Guaira - Venezuela, or Colón - Panama, which allows great flexibility and is expected to attract passengers from Latin America. It was confirmed a block of cabins will also be reserved for Arubans wishing to travel on the Monarch. The fifth port of call for the one-week cruise will be Curacao.

CEO of the Aruba Tourism

Authority, Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes was also present for the confirmation of this new cruise service to Aruba, expressing the gratitude of the ATA for this demonstration of commitment and confidence in Aruba by Pullmantur. Prime Minister Eman presented Mr. Martin and Florez with a lovely statuette of Aruba's famous Divi trees as a memento of the occasion.

by Rosalie Klein

Heavy promotion in the works for 2012 Aruba Sea Jazz Festival



Just recently the Caribbean Sea Jazz Foundation joined the Aruba Tourism Authority in organizing a promotional trip to Curacao and Suriname.

Press conferences were organized in these countries to invite both countries to travel to Aruba during the week of the sixth edition of the festival.

This year's Jazz Festival, scheduled for October 5 and 6 is counting on the presence of famed musicians like, among others, Chaka Khan, Oscar de Leon, Fourplay, Trandy Brecker, Pete Philly, Kuenta and Tambu, and many more.

In Curacao, the press con-

ference was held in the ballroom of the Renaissance Curacao Resort, and in Suriname the press met in the Marriott Courtyard. A large turnout of press people, news papers, radio and television came to both conferences. The interest in the festival is very big and constantly growing from year to year.

This year, the organizers decided to do more promotion in the Caribbean region to attract more international visitors to the festival.

A special feature of this promotional trip is that the Aruba JEMM band also travelled with them and did a special presentation. The JEMM band presentation

drew a large crowd. They used that opportunity to invite people to come to Aruba for the festival.

Present at the press conferences were, organizer, Erik Jan Eman, Mandy Lopez and Amayra Boekhoudt of ATA, Mark-Benson Denz (Public Relations), Trevor Nisbeth (Insel Air), Lindonar Henrietta (Holiday Inn), and Migelda Wong (BES Reizen).

Information on the Festival is available at: www.caribbeanseajazz.com or on face book at Caribbean Sea Jazz.

This year's Aruba Sea Jazz Festival promises to be simply unforgettable!

Unique project designed for the elderly – Smile Mobile



SAN NICOLAS -- About 4 years ago the idea for helping the elderly with their dental needs was born in the mind of Lion Club member, Igor Croes. After treating various elderly persons, he decided to start a project that would help them much faster and more efficiently.

He approached the organization of which he is a member. The president applauded the idea and Igor began the process of procuring a mobile. After an intense search he succeeded in locating a vehicle which would serve the purpose of repairing dentures of the elderly.

With the help of his colleagues Igor was able to repair and equip the vehicle he got. And on Saturday August 26, they intend to inaugurate this vehicle at the retirement home in the Palisiaweg in San Nicolas. The vehicle got the name "Smile Mobile."

This vehicle is fully equipped with sophisticated machines and material necessary to repair and adjust dentures immediately and at the residence of the elderly.

Aruba Lions Club is the organization that manages this project. The "Smile Mobile" will be unique in the Caribbean and possible in the world. Some of those who donated to make it possible are: Jossy Motor, JR Auto-center, Fast Delivery Service, Delta Blue Electronic, Lawyers Gomez & Bikker and Aruba Lions Club.

This innovative project is certainly most welcome here, and our elderly will be well served with such a fantastic project.



NOTICE: Dr. Weststrate's office closed August 26 to September 2

SAN NICOLAS -- All patients of Dr. Weststrate please take note that the doctor's office will be closed as of August 26 – September 2, 2012.

From September 3, his office will be located in B. van der Veen Zeppenfeldstraat 51, location of offices of Dr. Boderie and Dr. Cheung, where Dr. Wever will continue treating Dr. Weststrate's patients.

During the period of August 27 – August 31 Dr. Luchmun will be attending emergency cases.

New Director of Santa Rosa . . .

Continued from page 2



The Minister reported that they took Nathalie Maduro away from her post at the ATA office and sent her to Santa Rosa. This was due to the obvious love she demonstrated for agriculture and livestock, a profession she has been practicing at home for years. Choosing Nathalie to be part of the Management Team was a surprise to Nathalie, but she took the challenge. In the course of 2 years she developed remarkably in different areas, including in management. She proved that she has the necessary ingredients for making Santa Rosa grow even more.

After reviewing the applications of 4 persons who applied for the job of director of Santa Rosa, the final decision was made to nominate Nathalie Maduro as the new director of Santa Rosa. The decision was based on her ample experience and on the tremendous changes which took place here during her tenure as part of the management team.

Everyone was encouraged to continue supporting Nathalie so that together the department can continue to shine in the community and continue to grow.

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Enseñanza pa Empleo teaming up with IDEA



ORANJESTAD -- The government sponsored institution providing short duration courses for upgrading of people in a variety of areas, EPE, has announced a joint venture project with the Department of Economic Affairs. Enseñansa pa Empleo (EPE)

will be offering the 12 week course initiated by the government as part of a first offering from the new IDEA department.

The course is scheduled to begin September 3rd. The focus of the course will be to help rising entrepreneurs to get all the necessary skills and know-how of operating a successful business. The course modules will focus on different topics: Marketing, Labor Laws, Business Plan, Quick Books and Leadership.

Registration forms are

available at IDEA at the Department of Economic Affairs. Contact phone numbers are: 582-1181 and at EPE 582-5662.

They intend to evaluate how this course will go and possibly introduce a second course with the intention of broadening the subject area. The course is for everyone with some specific requirements. For example, the registrant must have at least a high school education (MAVO), and must be a legal Aruban resident.



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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Colo. suspect James Holmes made threat in March

Newly filed court records allege that the man accused of opening fire on a Colorado movie theater in July told a classmate he wanted to kill people four months before the shooting. Prosecutors made the contention in a motion released yesterday. They are seeking access to James Holmes' records from the University of Colorado Denver's neuroscience graduate program.

Prosecutors wrote that Holmes left the program in June after also making unspecified threats to a professor that month and failing his year-end final.

Holmes' attorneys argue that prosecutors should have no ac-

cess to his student records. The papers they filed in response to prosecutors do not address the allegations of threats.

Holmes is charged with killing 12 and wounding 58 during the July 20 attack on a midnight showing of "The Dark Knight Rises" in Aurora, Colorado. Holmes' defense lawyer, Daniel King, has said Holmes is mentally ill, setting up a possible insanity defense.

But arguments at a hearing Thursday by Chief Deputy District Attorney Karen Pearson revealed a possible motive: Holmes' anger that he was failing at school, "at the same time he's buying an enormous amount of ammunition, body armor and explosives."

Hospital: Swiss lab to analyse Arafat remains for poisoning

GENEVA (AFP) - A Swiss radiology lab said yesterday it has received the go-ahead from the widow of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to test his remains for poisoning by polonium, a highly radioactive element.

Darcy Christen, a spokesman for the lab at the Lausanne University Hospital Centre, told AFP they were waiting for a formal lawyer's letter before travelling to Ramallah to carry out the probe.

"Time is of the essence, you could say it's a question of weeks, not months, because the traceability of polonium diminishes by half every 138 days," Christen said, noting that this has occurred 20 times since Arafat died aged 75 on November 11, 2004.

The Palestinian Authority also approved the probe, which was requested by Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas after

a media investigation found elevated levels of polonium on some of Arafat's belongings, including clothing he wore before he died at a military hospital outside Paris.

A statement from French lawyers acting for Arafat's widow Suha Arafat and their daughter Zawra welcomed the authority's comments.

"We are glad that the position of the Palestinian Authority is to accept the exhumation of the body of Yasser Arafat," Pierre-Olivier Sur and Jessica Finelle wrote.

"However, we consider that this act of enquiry should be in coordination with the French investigating system... which should appoint an investigating judge to conduct the necessary enquiries," the statement said.

It added that such an appointment must be made "very quickly: it is a matter of weeks or even days from now."

11 hit in Empire State Building shoot-out

NEW YORK (AFP) - A laid-off designer of women's accessories gunned down a former co-worker outside New York's Empire State Building before being killed by police in a rush hour shoot-out yesterday that wounded nine others.

None of the nine injured in the horrific, but brief shooting outside the iconic skyscraper risked dying, Police Commissioner Ray Kelly told a news conference.

The FBI quickly ruled out terrorism, a constant worry for New York's authorities.

Kelly identified the gunman as Jeffrey Johnson, a "disgruntled former worker" from a women's apparel business called Hazan Imports. His age was originally given as 53 but later corrected to 58.

"Johnson had been employed for six years at Hazan Imports as a designer of women's accessories. During a downsizing at the company

Ecuador demands 'public apology' from Britain over Assange

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Ecuador yesterday demanded a "public apology" from Britain for allegedly threatening to enter the Ecuadoran embassy in London to arrest WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange.

Ecuadoran Foreign Minister Ricardo Patino condemned



Bystanders and a police officer stand on Fifth Avenue to view the scene after a multiple shooting outside the Empire State Building

about a year ago Johnson was laid off," Kelly said.

At about 9:00 am, just when the streets around the Empire State Building were filling with office workers and tourists, Johnson went to his former workplace and had an argument with an employee identified by US media as vice

president of sales Steven Ercolino.

Johnson produced a pistol and fired at close range, striking his 41-year-old victim in the head," Kelly said. Kelly said the man used a .45 caliber handgun with a magazine capacity of eight rounds and fired three shots.

Britain for what he called the "assault on our sovereignty" during a debate before the Organization of American States.

The meeting of the 34-

member regional body was convened at Ecuador's request to consider a resolution rejecting any attempt to put at risk its embassy's "inviolability."



CARACAS : Photos depicts a graffiti of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, part of a spontaneous advertising movement "Chavez es otro Beta", in Caracas, Venezuela. To support Chavez's re-election, a group of young people called "Miranda será otro Beta" launched a new campaign aimed at youngsters and which attempts to show a youthful Chavez, depicting him in different attitudes




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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Breivik rejects 'illegitimate' court but says won't appeal

OSLO (AFP) - Norway's mass-killer Anders Behring Breivik yesterday dismissed his sentence of 21 years by declaring the Oslo court "illegitimate", but also said he would not appeal against the jail term.

Asked by the presiding judge whether he would appeal, he reiterated his earlier stance that "I do not recognise this court because you received your mandate from political parties that support multiculturalism."

He added, "I would like to end with a statement of regret. I would like to apologise to all militant nationalists in Norway and in Europe for not having killed more people," but he was cut off mid-sentence by presiding judge Wenche Elizabeth Arntzen who, visibly irritated, silenced his microphone.

"This is not the point to address anyone outside this courtroom," she said. "You have to address me. I asked

you a question. I interpret you as saying that you take time to consider..."

"I do not take time to consider," Breivik shot back defiantly. After a brief chat, his defence lawyer confirmed that Breivik would not challenge his sentence, spelling the end of the trial.

The rightwing extremist - who targeted the centre-left government and a Labour Party youth movement because of their support for multiculturalism -- had stressed before his microphone was cut: "In my view this sentence and judgement is illegitimate."

"At the same time I cannot appeal against the judgement because by appealing I would legitimise the court," he said.

The man who killed 77 people last year in a bomb and shooting rampage told Arntzen and her panel: "You have sided with the multicultural majority in parliament."

Syria refugee exodus swells as fighting heats up

ALEPPO (AFP) - The number of refugees fleeing civil war in Syria has surged to over 200,000, the UN said yesterday, as fighter jets and tanks reportedly unleashed deadly new raids in hotspots across the country.

Western powers are focused on tightening the screws on President Bashar al-Assad while the 17-month conflict grinds on with neither government forces nor rebels able to claim decisive gains on the battlefield.

Warplanes and artillery again pounded the northern hub of Aleppo and at least 21 civilians were killed in an air strike and shelling in the eastern town of Mayadin, a watchdog said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said August is already the deadliest single month of the conflict with more than 4,000 people killed in barely three weeks, and an overall death toll of around 24,500.

Thousands of Syrians took to the streets after weekly Muslim prayers, calling for Assad's downfall but also

protesting at the lack of action by the international community.

The West is nevertheless ramping up the pressure, with Washington and London threatening possible action if Damascus uses its chemical weapons although Moscow has told them not to meddle in Syria's internal affairs.

France also said it backed a partial no-fly zone over Syria, where the regime is intensifying its attacks from the air as it battles to stamp out rebel strongholds in Aleppo and pockets of resistance in the capital Damascus.

Syria's only regional Iran said it will submit a proposal for ending the conflict at a Non-Aligned Movement summit next week, saying it included "all parties" but giving no further details.

France and Germany also said they are pushing for Security Council action on the humanitarian crisis gripping much of the country, where the UN says over one million are homeless and a total of 2.5 million in need of help.

The UN refugee agency

said the flow of refugees fleeing the fighting had jumped, with 202,500 people registering in neighbouring countries.

Neighbouring Lebanon was rattled again by new fighting yesterday between rival pro-and anti-Assad communities in the northern city of Tripoli, with 14 people killed since Monday, adding to fears of a spillover of the Syria conflict.

In the day's bloodiest single attack in Syria, 21 people including 12 women and a child were killed in an air and artillery strike in Mayadin that levelled at least one residential building, Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman told AFP.

The Observatory has a network of activists on the ground but its information cannot be independently confirmed.

It also reported heavy shelling on several districts of Aleppo, scene of the fiercest fighting since the conflict first entangled the commercial and manufacturing hub a month ago, as well as Daraa, the northwestern province of Idlib and Hama in the center.



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Health & Living

US court rejects graphic cigarette warnings



WASHINGTON (AFP) - A US court on Friday shot down orders to slap graphic anti-smoking messages on cigarette packs, saying the government overstepped its authority by trying to "browbeat" smokers into quitting.

In line with campaigns in several other nations, the United States planned from September 22 to require images on cigarette packs including a man smoking through a hole in his throat and a body with chest staples on an autopsy table.

In a 2-1 decision, the US Court of Appeals in Washington said that the images planned on cigarette packs were not necessarily false but they went beyond "pure attempts to convey information to consumers."

Tobacco companies had filed suit against the Food and Drug Administration, saying that the cigarette warnings vio-

lated the US Constitution's First Amendment which prohibits any law that restricts freedom of speech.

Judge Janice Rogers Brown wrote that the government "can certainly require that consumers be fully informed about the dangers of hazardous products."

"But this case raises novel questions about the scope of the government's authority to force the manufacturer of a product to go beyond making purely factual and accurate commercial disclosures and undermine its own economic interest," she wrote.

Brown said the court faced the question of how much leeway to grant the government "to convey the state's subjective -- and perhaps even ideological -- view that consumers should reject this otherwise legal, but disfavored, product."

Brown pointed to the Food and Drug Administration's own

statement last year when announcing the warnings that every pack of cigarettes would become "a mini-billboard" for its message.

The judge also said that the agency did not sufficiently prove that the graphic warnings would reduce rates of smoking.

The issue could end up in the US Supreme Court. The appeals court was upholding a lower court decision, but a separate bench in Cincinnati said in March that the legislation that paved the way for the warnings was constitutional.

Friday's ruling came nine days after global tobacco firms lost a similar case in Australia, where the High Court upheld laws requiring that tobacco products be sold in drab, uniform packaging with graphic health warnings.

Nearly half of young Swedes believe cancer contagious: study

(AFP) - Nearly half of Swedes aged between 16 and 20 think cancer is a contagious disease, according to a study by a Swedish charity supporting young patients.

Ung Cancer found that 44 percent of young people thought that leukaemia could be transmitted via contact with someone's blood.

"We didn't think their knowledge would be great but certain figures shocked us," said Ung Cancer's secretary general Julia Mjoernstedt.

"For example, only one percent knew that a vaccine is available against the human papillomavirus which can cause cervical cancer. It's terrifying."

Only a fraction of people

(0.07 percent) knew that drinking alcohol is a risk factor in getting cancer, although 70 percent did know about the dangers of smoking.

The charity said it would

"work to increase the level of knowledge."

A total of 945 people across 13 high schools were interviewed for the study.



As the hot summer continues, beware of heat-related illnesses and take these simple precautions necessary to preventing them: When outdoors, make sure to drink plenty of fluids, especially water. Try to avoid drinks with large amounts of caffeine, alcohol, or sugar, as these can inhibit your body's cooling process. Start drinking before you get thirsty. When temperatures get extremely high, make sure to go someplace cool, out of the heat. Even a few hours of air conditioning per day can prevent heat stroke. If you exercise outside, try to do it in the early morning or late evening, when temperatures are cooler. Wear lightweight, loose, light-colored clothing, including wide-brimmed hats.

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Sci-Tech

Facebook unveils speedier app for iPhone, iPad



(AFP) - Facebook unveiled a new mobile app Thursday for its users on Apple iPhone and iPad, saying it would speed up the performance of people accessing the world's biggest social network.

The new app is "a major update to the Facebook for iOS rebuilt from the ground up, to focus on one thing, performance," said Facebook product manager Mick Johnson.

Johnson told AFP that those using the app on Apple devices would be able to perform many functions "twice as fast" including opening the application, scrolling through their newsfeed and opening a photo.

"We kept the visual layout pretty much the same," he said. "The focus of this was performance."

Facebook made other improvements to help make its app more user-friendly, Johnson said.

"We saw many people using Facebook for iPhone one-handed," he said, so the developers made it easier to do certain things such as opening or closing a photo by swiping the screen with one's thumb.

The new version of the app for iPad will also allow users to create a "timeline" which can be done on Facebook in other versions.

The Facebook 5.0 app will be compatible with versions 4.3 and newer of the Apple mobile operating system.

Facebook has some 500 million mobile users, but the company does not break down statistics for those using specific operating systems.

Microsoft's new logo after 25 years



After twenty five years Microsoft has decided that it's time to change their logo. The company said that with so many new products and updates coming up, Microsoft is entering a new era and needs a new logo to symbolize that. The new look includes colored squares adapted from the company's Windows logo and removes the italic and bold font from the Microsoft name. The new logo started its rollout yesterday, making its appearance on several well-trafficked areas of Microsoft.com, as well as the company's official Microsoft pages for Twitter and Facebook.



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Greenpeace raids Russian Arctic oil platform



(AFP) - Greenpeace activists on Friday scaled the sides of an Arctic oil platform owned by Russian group Gazprom to draw attention to the dangers of drilling in one of the world's last pristine reserves.

Two Gazprom helicopters hovered over the group and periodically sprayed them with pressurised streams of ice water as they hung down on ropes from the side of Gazprom's huge red Prirazlomnaya platform, due to start commercial operations next year.

"They're hosing us," Greenpeace International's Executive Director Kumi Naidoo tweeted, while the team held up bright yellow signs reading "Save the Arctic!" and "Stop Gazprom!"

Naidoo said he did not expect coast guards to reach the

remote spot of the inhospitable sea until today and posted pictures of the team setting up swinging tents in which they planned to spend the night and have dinner.

The daring raid comes as Russia takes the lead from other Arctic energy powers in exploiting previously untouched territory for what is believed to be one of the world's largest holdings of recoverable oil and natural gas.

Gazprom's independent project is due to kick off next year just as fellow state oil firm Rosneft begins its own initial explorations with new partner ExxonMobil.

The area -- also the subject of territorial rows with resource rivals Canada and Norway -- is becoming especially attractive as the size of the ice shelf shrinks and conflicts

continue to rattle energy producers in the Middle East.

Critics say the risk of such work far outweighs the benefits it may offer either the Russian government or consumers through cheaper fuel.

"The Prirazlomnaya platform will produce no more than seven million tonnes of oil a year," Greenpeace Russia director Vladimir Chuprov told Moscow Echo radio.

"And the country needs to produce 500 million tonnes a year."

The state-owned firm immediately denied any impact on the platform's operations and said the activists had turned down an offer to enter the base for talks.

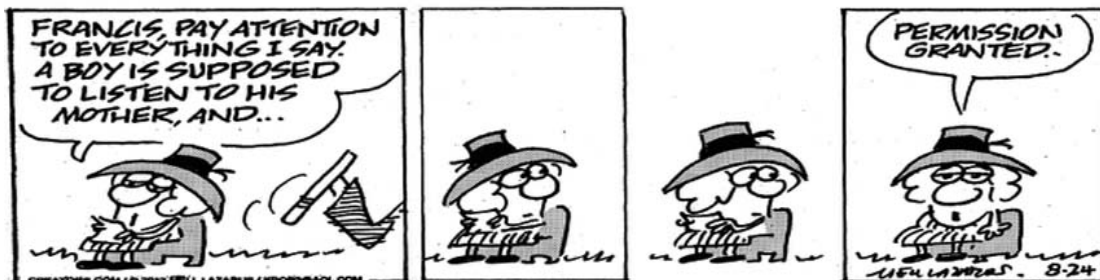


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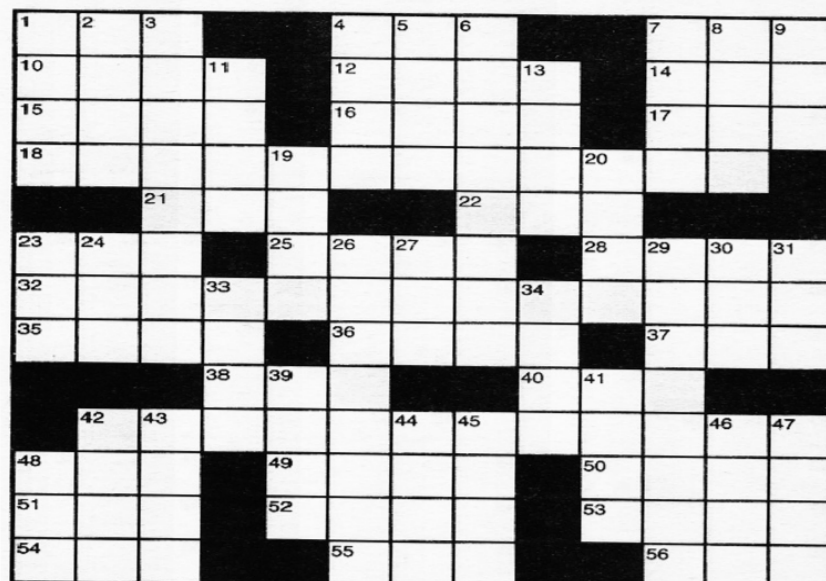
FEVERISH PHRASES

ACROSS

1. Drink cognac
4. Slightly better than failing
7. Jamboree inits.
10. Arkin, the younger
12. Italian river
14. Rowboat accessory
15. Inoculations
16. Morse-code sounds
17. Lager's kin
18. Winter warmer
21. Driving device
22. Capone's group, informally
23. Gallic pal
25. "Moby Dick" captain
28. Olden verb endings
32. 1959 Monroe classic
35. Gardener, at times
36. Parts of drum sets
37. Badlands Indian
38. ___ story
40. Pig out
42. Source of a sidewalk snack
48. Huck's pal
49. Ford's running mate

DOWN

1. Pinafore tie
2. Notion: prefix
3. Like an after-school job
4. Wainscot
5. Heiden or Severeid
6. Sealed a pyramid
7. Catamaran
8. "Love for ___" (Cole Porter)
9. Part of "to be"
11. Ceremonial club
13. 1952 Olympics host
19. Mend
20. Facilitate a felony
23. Hearth residue
24. Guernsey greeting
26. Fisher's footwear
27. Police blotter inits.
29. Close up shop
30. Day-care denizen
31. Holy femme: abbr.
33. Formerly
34. "Gotcha," formally
39. Against all ___
41. Hill builders
42. Gap
43. Red sky at night, e.g.
44. Adhesive substance
45. Outlet for the dryer
46. Neighbor of Saudi Arabia
47. Coty or Clair
48. Halter, e.g.



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Sudoku

5				8	3			9	6
				2				5	
6	8	9	7	5	4			1	
	3					6	1		9
			4	1		3	6		
1		6	5					8	
	7		3	2	5	9	6	1	
	6				7				
9	5				4	8			7

SOLUTION

L	E	Z	8	4	9	1	5	6
8	7	5	2	1	6	3	9	4
1	9	6	5	2	3	8	7	4
3	8	7	2	1	5	9	6	4
5	2	9	6	3	1	7	4	8
6	2	1	9	8	7	5	3	4
2	1	3	7	5	2	4	6	8
7	5	8	6	9	2	1	3	4
9	6	4	1	3	8	7	2	5

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A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9

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Mainstreet Downtown Aruba

Finance

Spain denies negotiations on sovereign rescue

MADRID (AFP) - Spain's government denied yesterday that it had entered negotiations for a sovereign rescue, which would make it the largest victim so far of the eurozone crisis.

Deputy Prime Minister Soraya Saenz de Santamaria repeated to journalists a denial issued earlier in the day in Brussels by a spokesman for European Commissioner for the euro Olli Rehn.

The spokesman, Simon O'Connor, told a news conference there was only one program being implemented for Spain, referring to a 100-billion-euro (\$124 billion) banking rescue loan from the eurozone.

"There are no negotiations under way for any other sort of

program for Spain," he said.

After reading out that statement in a Madrid news conference, the Spanish deputy premier added: "I confirm it."

O'Connor said in Brussels, however, that political and technical talks over the crisis were going on all the time with Spain, which has the eurozone's fourth largest economy.

Spain's economy is more than twice the combined size of those of Ireland, Greece and Portugal, the three eurozone countries to have received bailouts to date.

Investors increasingly believe that Spain will be forced to request a bailout for its economy as Madrid struggles to borrow money on the international markets at affordable rates.

Shareholders get \$3.2 bln if Heineken offer is approved

SINGAPORE (AFP) - Singapore conglomerate Fraser and Neave (F&N) said yesterday it plans to distribute Sg\$4.0 billion (\$3.2 billion) to shareholders if an offer by Dutch firm Heineken to buy its stake in a brewery is approved.

F&N shareholders are due to vote at an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) on whether they are in favour of Heineken's revised Sg\$5.6 billion offer for F&N's stake in Asia Pacific Breweries (APB), the maker of Tiger Beer.

A date for the EGM has yet to be set.

Heineken already owns 42 percent of APB and is seeking full control of the brewery by buying over long-time partner F&N's direct and indirect stake of 40 percent as it moves to expand in the fast-growing Asian beer market.

The Amsterdam-based Dutch beer giant said last week it had inked a definitive agreement with F&N's board to "irrevocably recommend" the proposed deal to shareholders.

In a statement issued late yesterday, F&N said that if the deal is approved, "the company intends to distribute approximately Sg\$4.0 billion from the cash proceeds of the proposed transaction to shareholders."

The cash distribution, representing 84 percent of the gains after transaction costs, will be done through a capital reduction exercise aimed at achieving a "more efficient capital" structure for the company, F&N said.

The rest of the proceeds, or about Sg\$1.6 billion, will be used to repay existing debt and strengthen the balance sheet of the F&N Group.

Heineken has said the deal, if approved, was expected to be completed in the fourth quarter of this year, but no later than December 15.

The Dutch brewer was forced to up its bid to Sg\$5.6 billion from Sg\$5.1 billion to fend off a rival party headed by Thai billionaire Charoen Sirivadhanabhakdi.

Charoen's Thai Beverage is a key shareholder in F&N, along with Japanese brewer Kirin Holdings.

Merkel gives Greece grounds for euro hope

BERLIN (AFP) - Chancellor Angela Merkel offered a ray of hope to Greece yesterday, stressing that she wanted the debt-burdened country to stay in the eurozone and pledging German help after crisis talks with the Greek prime minister.

"I want to say very clearly ... that Greece is part of the eurozone and I want Greece to remain part of the eurozone. This guides all our discussions," Merkel said at a joint news conference with Antonis Samaras.

"I am deeply convinced that the new Greek government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Samaras, is doing everything to solve the prob-

lems that Greece is facing.

"We know that this requires great sacrifices ... and Germany has always said that it will support Greece in this," added the chancellor.

For his part, Samaras pledged to stick to all of Greece's promises to its international creditors and said that he was not asking for more bailout money, but just "breathing space" to implement the necessary spending cuts and reforms.



EADS: Rancher Gary Wollert inspects a dead cow on dry grasslands on August 22, 2012 near Eads, Colorado. Many cattle have contracted respiratory infections due to the wide temperature swings in this summer's heat-wave and drought. While most cases have been cured with antibiotics, some have been fatal. Most of the high plains areas of eastern Colorado and virtually all of Nebraska and Kansas are still in extreme or exceptional drought, despite recent lower temperatures, according to the University of Nebraska's Drought Monitor. The record-breaking drought, which has affected more than half of the continental United States, is expected to drive up food prices by 2013 due to lower crop harvests and the adverse effect on the nation's cattle industry.

(AFP PHOTO)

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

TIC	PAL	EATS
ETA	MILE	ILET
DAM	ATOM	GAME
POTATO	CHIPS	
STORE	NUT	
ARUT	COAT	ADA
FIT	ORD	PET
EMS	ACRE	APSE
ALA	OLLIE	
PICNIC	TABLE	
LORD	OREO	PEA
AWAY	LORE	IRK
YAMS	ADO	ERA



Current as 08/24-/2012	Currency Code	Buying rate banknotes	Buying Cheques	Selling Rate
U.S.A.	USD	1.77	1.78	1.80
Dutch Antilles	ANG	98.00	100.00	100.20
Canada	CAD	1.77	1.79	1.81
Britain	GBP	2.76	2.81	2.87
Switzerland	CHF	185.30	186.02	186.82
Netherlands	EUR	220.74	222.76	224.99
Sweden	SEK	26.04	26.76	27.56
Denmark	DKK	28.94	29.66	30.46
Norway	NOK	29.54	30.26	31.06
Japan	JPY	224.88	226.93	229.21

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Renowned herpetologist R. Andrew Odum delivers lecture on the endangered Aruban Cascabel



The Team

Officials of Aruba's Arikok National Park and the University of Aruba were pleased to host an informative lecture by Curator of Herpetology for the Toledo Zoo, R. Andrew "Andy" Odum and Species Coordinator of the Toledo Zoological Society. Mr. Odum has long been a champion of rescuing the endemic Aruban rattlesnake, *Crotalus unicolor*, the unique cascabel. Since 1980 he has been instrumental in providing interest and support for preserving another endangered species.

Mr. Odum was visiting to arrange to transport of some cascabel to the Toledo Zoo for study and preservation of their line, as part of the Species Survival Plan (SSP) which began first with the

Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA.) SSP is an in-situ plan, aimed at preserving different species within their natural environment. An integral part of this is maintaining species diversification with snakes bred in captivity, allowing them to be introduced into the wild if cascabel numbers drop too low for them to avoid extinction.

Mr. Odum gave a history of the early days of the project, when study teams ventured into Aruba's wild areas to study the cascabel and its habits. Dedicated researchers mapped their territories by catching them and inserting radio transmitters, as well as studying their eating habit. Snakes are generally shy creatures, and chance encounters with humans are

rare, but will certainly be more frequent as the island population grows and housing developments encroach on their habitats.

All snakes on Aruba, even the invasive boa constrictor, do serve a useful purpose as they help control vermin, such as mice and rats. These small mammals increase in number with an increase in human presence, as it provides them with rich feeding grounds; this will also attract the snakes to human developments, as their favorite food is more readily available. 48.5% of a cascabel's diet is these small mammals. They also consume a large number of the Aruba Whip-tail lizard, the bright blue kododo, and other lizards, which account for 42.4% of their intake, the remaining 9.1% are birds.

The early studies resulted in several benefits for Aruba, including improved training at the hospital for treating snakebite and the gift of antivenoms to be kept in stock. Intensive studies in 2001 and 2004 provided impetus for the creation of the Arikok Park, and the data of the snake territories helped established its borders. Mr. Odum participated in all of these, along with a coterie of internationally renowned herpetologists and a team of



with Indra Zandaam and Diego Marques of PNA

local volunteers passionate about preserving Aruba's ecology.

Based upon the early studies, a preservation program was drafted. However, the arrival and proliferation of boa constrictors, first spotted around 2000, has presented new questions and areas of study, which they have pursued with vigor over the past seven years.

"Being an island," explained Mr. Odum, "we can assume that any fauna on Aruba is actually a non-native species." Goats, sheep, owls, iguanas, rabbits,

geckos, mice, and rats were transported to Aruba, either intentionally or unknowingly. Rats, mice and lizards could easily come off the many ships and small boats that called in port, or rabbits and iguanas brought live, to be used as food.

"The boa project team are the scientific fighters against the boa," he stated, "boas must be managed with facts, not perceptions." The community must use accurate information and intelligence to "fight the invader." He also stated his belief that eventually, in time, a sort of equilibrium will very likely be reached, and it not realistic to expect the boa to be completely eliminated from the island ecology. "Studying a creature one learns to appreciate and admire it," he observed. He described the boa as beautiful snake, and not the least aggressive; very calm when being handled by humans. "It is understandable why it make a good pet."



a 3 meter boa, the largest found on Aruba to date

He also reminded the audience that he is also known as "The Crazy Snake Guy."

In August of 2008 the first National Congress for the Preservation of Aruban Wildlife, WildAruba, took place. They issued an in-depth report of findings and recommendations, which can be viewed online. A WildAruba II is scheduled August 19-21, 2013. Information about the upcoming congress, updates on the status of Aruba fauna and their preservation, can be found at the website: <http://www.wildaruba.org/>.

Mr. Odum completed his lecture with the good news that presently, the rattlesnake population appears stable. Habitats and behavior appear to differ sufficiently between the boas and cascabel allowing them to coexist; but they will continue to monitor the situation.

by Rosalie Klein

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French intellectuals question goal to eradicate prostitution

PARIS (AFP) - Some of France's leading intellectuals have poured scorn on the government's goal of eradicating prostitution.

Writing in the weekly political magazine *Le Nouvel Observateur*, a collection of academics, artists and writers suggest efforts to get rid of the world's oldest profession are bound to fail and question whether the Socialist administration should even be trying.

Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, the minister for women, caused a stir in June when she announced the new government would attempt to end the sale of sex.

Responding, the intellectuals said any move to liberate women from sexual slavery or the clutches of organised crime would be welcome.

But they argued that talk of "abolishing" prostitution was based on "two debatable assumptions: that charging for sex is an affront to women's dignity and that all prostitutes are all victims of their bastard clients."

They added: "A women

who prostitutes herself, whether she does so occasionally or full-time, is not necessarily a victim of male oppression.

"And the clients are not all horrible predators or sexual obsessives who treat the woman as disposable objects."

Among the signatories to the article were philosopher Elisabeth Badinter, writer Regine Desforges and filmmaker Claude Lanzmann.

As things stand, prostitution in itself is not a crime in France but various connected activities, including advertising sex for sale, procuring someone for sex and running a brothel, are.

Vallaud-Belkacem is considering the introduction of new measures to target the clients of prostitutes.

But the intellectuals believe that criminalising clients will only force prostitution even more underground, making the women involved more vulnerable to exploitation by pimps.

"The road to hell is paved with good intentions," they warn.

Disgraced Galliano stripped of France's top honour



PARIS (AFP) - Disgraced British designer John Galliano has been stripped of the Legion d'Honneur, the top French medal he was awarded in 2009 for services to haute couture.

Galliano, 51, will no longer have the right to wear the medal following its withdrawal under a decree signed by President Francois Hollande which was published in France's official journal yesterday.

The former artistic director of fashion house Dior was convicted last year of hurling anti-Semitic insults at patrons of a Paris bar.

Galliano blamed the outburst on drink and drug problems and went into rehab for two months. He has since kept a low profile, but recent unconfirmed reports suggest he is considering moving to Los Angeles.

Dior have replaced him with Belgian designer Raf Simons.

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SPORTS

Boxing: Fallen 'King' Abraham out to prove a point



BERLIN (AFP) - Former middleweight champion Arthur Abraham admits he has a point to prove when he challenges world super-middleweight belt-holder Robert Stieglitz today.

Abraham, 32, is facing retirement if he loses the world title bout in Berlin.

Having held the IBF middleweight belt from 2005 to

2009, Abraham made 10 successful defences before losing three of his four bouts during the Super Six super-middleweight bouts when he stepped up a division.

Having fought his way back to claim the European WBO super-middleweight title earlier this year, Abraham takes on compatriot Stieglitz for the world crown and says he will

let his fists do the talking.

"Actions speak louder than words and I am going to answer all questions inside the ring," he said as he looks to live up to his 'King Arthur' moniker with a record of 27 knock-outs in 34 wins and three defeats.

"From this point onwards, every fight is going to be a last chance for me. But I will grab it with both hands. No matter if the fight goes the distance or not - I will prove a point."

Stieglitz will be defending his title for the seventh time having first won it three years ago.

"I feel great and I am going to defend my title," said the 31-year-old champion, who boasts 23 knock-outs in 42 wins with two defeats.

"My preparations have been going extremely well."

The fight promises to be interesting: Stieglitz has great technique, but Abraham is known for his powerful punches.

Germany's WBA super-middleweight and IBF middleweight title-holder Felix Sturm has said he will fight the winner of today's bout.

Football: Champions Dortmund down Bremen to open 50th season



Dortmund's Polish midfielder Jakub Blaszczykowski (R) and Werder Bremen's midfielder Aleksandar Ignjovski vie for the ball

BERLIN (AFP) - Defending champions Borussia Dortmund kicked off the 50th season of the Bundesliga on Friday with a 2-1 home win

over Werder Bremen thanks to goals from Germany stars Marco Reus and Mario Goetze.

Dortmund and Bremen contested the first Bundesliga match back in 1963 and it was the same pair who opened the 2012/13 season on Friday night at Borussia's sold-out Signal Iduna Park Stadium in front of 80,645 spectators.

New signings opened the scoring for both clubs as Reus fired home in the first-half for Dortmund, while Bremen's Czech Republic defender

Theodor Gebre Selassie headed the equaliser 15 minutes from time.

But Goetze grabbed the winner for the hosts just three minutes after coming off the bench.

"The way it happened didn't impress me or a few others, but the most important thing was to start with the three points," said Dortmund defender Mats Hummels.

Reus said he was just delighted to have made his debut.

"I had goosebumps when I ran out and I am happy that I am now a Dortmund player," said the 23-year-old.

Dortmund last lost in the league almost a year ago when they suffered a 2-1 defeat at Hanover on September 18, 2011, and this was their 29th game without losing in the Bundesliga.

They are just seven matches short of Hamburg's record of 36 matches set between 1982 and 1983.

Bayern Munich start their league campaign on Saturday at promoted Greuther Fuerth, who will make their debut in the Bundesliga, while Schalke 04 are at Hanover 96 on Sunday.



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Cycling: Ullrich tight-lipped about being handed Tour wins



BERLIN (AFP) - German cyclist Jan Ullrich on Friday refused to speculate about whether he would be handed three of the seven Tour de France titles won by US rider Lance Armstrong that may now be withdrawn over doping claims. "I'm not thinking about these titles. I don't know the details of the process. I'm proud of my second-place finishes," the 1997 Tour winner said of his runner-up spots behind the American in 2000, 2001 and 2003. Ullrich was speaking after the US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) said Armstrong would be banned for life and stripped of all of his titles following his decision to abandon a case against drug charges that have tainted his legacy. Last February, Ullrich was suspended for two years for a doping violation related to a Spanish police investigation into an illegal performance-enhancing drug network and all his results after May 2005 were annulled. Another German cyclist, Andreas Kloecken could also replace Armstrong as Tour winner for the 2004 edition, after he finished runner-up. But Kloecken has also been accused of doping in 2009 by experts tasked by the University of Freiburg to probe the work of two doctors in charge of medical support for the T-Mobile team in 2006.



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Paralympics: Intellectual disability sports return in London



PARIS (AFP) - Athletes with intellectual disabilities are competing at the Paralympics for the first time in 12 years, after an embarrassing scandal involving Spain's basketball team.

Three sports at the Games in the British capital are open to intellectual disability (ID) athletes -- athletics, swimming and table tennis -- following the introduction of stricter criteria for participation.

The categories were dropped for the last two Games in Athens and Beijing after 10 members of the gold-winning Spanish basketball team in Sydney in 2000 were told to hand back their medals because several players had no intellectual disability.

A journalist who played for

the side claimed afterwards that "at least 15 of the 200-strong Spanish (Paralympics) team had no physical or mental handicap" and that many participating countries had also selected non-disabled athletes.

The president of the International Paralympic Committee, Philip Green, said he was satisfied with new eligibility criteria drawn up by the International Sports Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability (INAS-FID) to prevent a repeat.

The re-introduction is a boost for ID athletes and the federations that represent them, who have struggled to gain as much recognition -- and funding -- as other para-sports.

Of the 4,200 athletes expected at the Games, there will

be some 200 ID athletes.

Pascal Pereira-Leal, the current world number one in the classification at table tennis, is one.

The 29-year-old says he has lived with a "psychological illness" since he was a teenager but according to his coach, Yves Drapeau, his passion for table tennis "has been the solution".

After a number of difficult years, including hospital stays, Pereira-Leal said he returned to his favourite sport, which during competition makes him forget his illness.

Competing at the London Paralympics is "a recognition, a dream", he said, his eyes sparkling.

More so than in any sport, what characterises ID athletes is determination, say their coaches, who are particularly proud of their proteges.

Adaptation, however, is key, the coaches say. Some athletes have difficulty understanding instructions or replicating movements.

Like Pereira-Leal, Mandin, who has epilepsy and dyslexia, said swimming is a form of escape.

Sport has helped change her character, from a painfully shy teenager lacking self-confidence to someone who now talks easily, said Sebire, who has coached the swimmer for nine years.

Lance Armstrong continued from page 16

Indeed, Armstrong has argued that at least some of the witnesses who have implicated him can't be trusted as they are themselves admitted dope cheats.

Former teammate Floyd Landis, who finally admitted doping years after he was stripped of his 2006 Tour de France title, accused Armstrong of systematic doping, helping trigger a federal government probe of Armstrong and others.

That investigation ended in February with no criminal charges brought, but it apparently provided further impetus to USADA's probe of the cyclist.

USADA said it also had blood tests taken from 2009-2010, when Armstrong briefly came out of retirement to compete internationally again, that were "fully consistent" with blood doping.

Armstrong, who retired from cycling last year, said he passed hundreds of drug tests

during his career and adhered to the rules in place at the time of his Tour de France wins.

Leaders of the anti-smoking and anti-cancer causes that Armstrong champions through his foundation rallied to his side, as did longtime sponsor Nike.

"Lance has stated his innocence and has been unwavering on this position. Nike plans to continue to support Lance and the Lance Armstrong Foundation, a foundation that Lance created to serve cancer survivors," the firm said.

"Reducing suffering and death from cancer is a moral imperative, and the Lance Armstrong Foundation's contribution is sorely needed," said John Seffrin, chief executive officer of the American Cancer Society.

However, World Anti-Doping Agency chief John Fahey said Armstrong's decision not to fight the charges could only be seen as an admission of guilt.

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Paralympics Olympic continued from page 16

A service centre equipped with 15,000 spare parts for wheelchairs and prosthetic limbs has been installed at the village, while buses are being converted to allow space for five or six wheelchairs and ramps widened for the 1,800 wheelchair users.

There will be 22 assistance dogs based at the Olympic Village.

Some 2,000 Paralympic athletes are already settling into their accommodation and some 1,100 more were arriving on Friday, Deighton said.

The Paralympics are the biggest in the event's 52-year history, involving a record 4,200 athletes and 166 competing nations.

Most of the 2.5 million tickets have been sold.

The Games will nonetheless involve a much smaller security and logistical operation than the Olympics, with just 3,500 military personnel on reserve compared to 18,000 for the Olympics.

A force of between 4,000 and 5,000 private security guards will also be deployed, Deighton said.

LOCOG chairman Sebastian Coe said that while the Paralympics would undoubtedly be smaller than the Olympics, high interest in tickets reflected public enthusiasm.

"We're only really halfway through an extraordinary summer of sport," he said.

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Paralympics: Olympic Park transformed for new Games



LONDON : Chairman of LOCOG Lord Sebastian Coe, (R) applauds as British paralympic athlete Claire Lomas (2nd L) lights the Paralympic Cauldron in London's Trafalgar Square yesterday. The London 2012 Paralympic Games begin on August 29, 2012

LONDON (AFP) - London 2012 organisers said on Friday that they were on track to finish adjustments to the Olympic Park in time for the biggest ever Paralympic Games, which open next week.

"The Olympic Games are a wonderful test event for the Paralympic Games," said Paul Deighton, chief executive of organisers LOCOG.

"We have planned for this two-week transition period as carefully as everything else we've done over the past seven years," he told a press conference. "Everything's in

great shape and I'm absolutely delighted."

Deighton said alterations were being made to Olympic venues and the Athletes' Village to ensure that they are accessible for those taking part in the competition, which opens next Wednesday and runs until September 9.

"The good news is that we built an accessible village from the start, so that actually alleviates the physical transition of the village," he said. "But there have been changes going on."

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Lance Armstrong stripped of Tour de France titles



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - The US anti-doping agency banned Lance Armstrong for life on Friday and stripped him of the record seven Tour de France titles that helped him become an inspirational icon of US sports.

USADA branded Armstrong a dope cheat a day after the 40-year-old Texan said he wouldn't pursue a bid to clear

himself of charges that he used performance enhancing drugs to win cycling's most prestigious race from 1999 to 2005.

The agency laid out five rule violations for which Armstrong has been sanctioned, saying the cancer survivor who became a hero to millions took part in a systematic doping conspiracy with his then

US Postal Service team.

It said that, as Armstrong has dropped out of an arbitration process, he "has received a lifetime period of ineligibility and disqualification of all competitive results from August 1, 1998 through the present".

Along with his celebrated haul of Tour titles Armstrong stands to lose the Olympic bronze medal he won in 2000 along with other race titles, prize money and other awards.

Armstrong, the only cyclist to win the Tour de France more than five times, had long vehemently denied doping accusations.

But on Thursday he said had grown weary of the fight and the strain it had put on his personal and professional life.

"There comes a point in every man's life when he has to say 'enough is enough.' For

me, that time is now," he said in a statement.

The International Cycling Union, the sport's governing body based in Aigle, Switzerland, had been fighting USADA for jurisdiction of Armstrong's case and could launch an appeal or fail to recognize the move.

However, USADA's statement made it clear they believe the UCI is bound by the World Anti-Doping Code to follow through on the sanctions.

"Because Mr. Armstrong could have had a hearing before neutral arbitrators to contest USADA's evidence and sanction and he voluntarily chose not to do so, USADA's sanction is final," the agency's statement said.

Armstrong, who has branded the USADA investigation "an unconstitutional witch hunt," had gone to court

in a bid to block the agency's proceedings.

But on Monday a federal judge in his hometown of Austin dismissed his lawsuit, leaving Armstrong until midnight on Thursday to tell USADA whether or not he would seek arbitration.

USADA maintains that Armstrong used banned substances -- including the blood-booster EPO, steroids and blood transfusions -- dating back to 1996, and said 10 of his former team-mates were ready to testify against him.

If the UCI confirms the move, it faces a potential headache of choosing new winners for the seven disputed tours, as a number of cyclists who finished behind the American have also been implicated in doping scandals.

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